

# Clinton Currents

Volume 8 ■ Issue 1

Clinton Township ■ Michigan

Spring/Summer 2008

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Clinton Township Civic Center  
40700 Romeo Plank Road  
Clinton Township, MI 48038

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## Changes to Assessing Rules Recognize Declining Property Values

Last March, many people were surprised when they received their new property assessment notice. Everyone knows that real estate values are headed down, but in some cases, assessments were up. Property owners need to be aware that, because of some changes in the rules at the state level, declining home values are being better reflected in the 2008 assessment year.

Under normal circumstances, assessments were previously based on a twenty four month period specified by the Michigan State Tax Commission. Unfortunately as the market values decline, it takes the lower values longer to get into the system, delaying what one would determine as a severely depressed market.



For this year, rules were relaxed by the State, and most if not all Assessors used what is called a twelve month study. This more accurately allowed for assessment reductions for the 2008 year, therefore was more reflective of the current

market. The study period was October of 2006 to September 2007, with assessment determination for 2008 being December 31, 2007.

## DOES THIS MEAN THAT MY PROPERTY TAXES GO DOWN?

When a property owner received their property assessment in March, they saw two numbers on the assessment notice: the state equalized value (SEV) and the taxable value. The SEV represents 50 percent of the true cash value as required by the state constitution and law. This value goes up or down without limit based on market conditions. Prior to 1994, this was the number used to calculate property tax bills.

When Proposal A passed in 1994, our state constitution was amended to say that a property owner should not pay property taxes on property values that were going up more than the rate of inflation or 5 percent, whichever is less. For more than a decade, the property taxes paid by property owners have been going up by only inflation, except for voter-approved increases in property taxes or because something was added to the property, such as a new garage.

When Proposal A was created, a cap was placed on how fast taxes could go up; it did not automatically reduce taxes when property values were heading down.

(continued on page 6)

## Clinton Township Directory

Civic Center: (586) 286-8000

Clinton Township Government Offices are open  
Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

40700 Romeo Plank Road Clinton Township, Michigan 48038

### Upcoming Board Meetings

May 5, 19 • June 2, 16, 30

July 14, 28 • August 11, 25

<b>EMERGENCY Police and Fire</b> . . . . .	<b>911</b>
<b>Assessing</b> . . . . .	<b>286-9468</b>
<b>Building, Permits and Ordinance</b>	
<b>Enforcement</b> . . . . .	<b>286-9323</b>
<b>Planning</b> . . . . .	<b>286-9325</b>
<b>Public Works</b> . . . . .	<b>286-9465</b>
<b>Water Department</b> . . . . .	<b>286-9300</b>
<b>Water After-hours number</b> . . . . .	<b>296-0687</b>
<b>Clerk's Office</b> . . . . .	<b>286-8000</b>
<b>Clerk's Elections Division</b> . . . . .	<b>286-9420</b>
<b>Supervisor's Office</b> . . . . .	<b>723-8092</b>
<b>Treasurer's Office</b> . . . . .	<b>286-9313</b>
<b>Trustees' Office</b> . . . . .	<b>286-9366</b>
<b>Police Department business</b> . . . . .	<b>493-7800</b>
<b>Fire Department business</b> . . . . .	<b>263-8437</b>
<b>United Way Helpful Information</b> . . . . .	<b>211</b>
<b>Parks and Recreation</b> . . . . .	<b>286-9336</b>
<b>Senior Center</b> . . . . .	<b>286-9333</b>
<b>Cable TV and Communications</b> . . . . .	<b>286-9316</b>

**CTTV** provides gavel-to-gavel coverage of Board meetings every other Monday live at 6:30 p.m. and re-telecasts on Saturday at 2 p.m. and Tuesday of the following week at 8 p.m. Meetings are Closed Captioned. Information about cable providers in the township can be found by calling: **723-8145**.

**WPYD-1610AM** is the township's information radio station. Tune in for weather information, road construction projects and emergency notices.

**Outdoor Warning Sirens** – The Township maintains voice and tone activated outdoor warning sirens throughout the township. The sirens are used to gain the attention of the public who are outdoors. The sirens are activated for severe weather under two circumstances: Tornado Warning for Macomb County and Winds of 70 mph or higher are possible along with severe thunderstorm. If you hear the sirens, take cover for your safety.

**All Clinton Township Departments are found at the web site [www.clintontownship-mi.gov](http://www.clintontownship-mi.gov)**

**Volume 8, Issue 1 Spring/Summer 2008**

**News and resources for the residents of Clinton Township**

Published by the Charter Township of Clinton © 2008

40700 Romeo Plank Road, Clinton Twp., Mich. 48038.

**Cable TV and Communications Department:**

**Director** Linda A. Badamo *Clinton Currents* Editor

## New 41-B District Court, Senior Center Fitness Room top the list of municipal building news

In 2005, an agreement was signed between Clinton Township, Harrison Township and Mount Clemens to combine all court locations into one unified court building with all three communities sharing the role of funding this facility.

Through the hard work of community leaders and the judges, including 41B District Court Chief Judge Linda Davis, Chief Judge Pro Tem Sebastian Lucido and Judge Sheila Miller, the township now has a new 47,000 square foot building to better serve the community.



The new 41B District Court is located at 22380 Starks Drive, north of Elizabeth Road and west of Groesbeck. The new phone number for 41B District Court is (586) 469-9300. The hours of operation at 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

With the court no longer located in the Civic Center, ten township departments will utilize the extra space for better ergonomic work flows on a daily basis, to ultimately serve the residents more efficiently: Public Works will move from its location at the southern end of the building to where the court used to be located. Also, Civil Service, Human Resources and the Trustees Office will move to the north end. Engineering will move to the former Human Resources offices. There will be additional office space as a result of the moves for Assessing, Building, Water and Sewer, and additional storage for Information Technology and Cable TV.

As a direct result of fundraising, the Clinton Township Senior Center expanded its wellness center and fitness room earlier this year. The Bill and Toni Lee Wellness Center is open to members of the Senior Center. Call (586) 286-9333 for more information and a tour of the facility.

The Fire Department has completed renovations to Stations 2 and 3. With new buildings and maintenance of the older facilities, the Clinton Township Fire-Rescue-EMS Department continues to round out service to all areas of the township. Constant training and data upkeep, along with several thousand runs annually, are business as usual in this emergency services department.



# Clinton Township Board



Dennis C. Tomlinson  
Clerk



William J. Sowerby  
Treasurer



George Fitzgerald  
Trustee



Ernest O. Hornung  
Trustee



Dean Reynolds  
Trustee



Jenifer "Joie" West  
Trustee

## Charter Township of Clinton



The elected members of the Clinton Township Board represent the residents of Clinton Township. The board meets every other Monday in the chambers at 40700 Romeo Plank Road.

Phone (586) 286-8000 to reach your township board members.



Robert J. Cannon  
Supervisor

As with every spring in the northern states, we are experiencing our share of road problems due to the winter month's wear and tear. We all wish that the Macomb County Road Commission had an unlimited budget, so that all of our roads could be put into a good, or at least reasonable condition; unfortunately, they do not.

Unfortunately, they do not have the monies to even begin keeping our roads in the condition that they should be in. You might ask, "Why doesn't the township keep up the roads?" It comes down to our form of government - a township as opposed to a city. By statute, the township is not allowed to do anything with any road and receives no funding for road repair and maintenance—they fall totally under the jurisdiction and responsibility of the road commission.

Although there are no funds available at the county level for subdivision road work, I would like to make our residents aware that there is a State Act in place for requesting the establishment of a special assessment district for road repair or replacement. Residents would sign a petition requesting the required work, and an estimate of the project cost would be prepared and presented at a special meeting. If over 50% of the ownership of the front footage in the project is in favor of the project, it will proceed. The township is simply the conduit for the Special Assessment District (SAD), and it is completed through the efforts of the county road commission. Special Assessment information is available in the Clerk's Office.

## Supervisor's Message

I hope this newsletter finds you and your loved ones ready to enjoy the splendor of Michigan weather that we have come to look forward to each spring.

I often request of the road commission that they do road repaving and repair in our community. Their response is they spend more in Clinton Township than is generated by the gas tax of our nearly 100,000 residents. I would encourage you to contact the road commission if you have severe problems that have not yet been addressed this spring.

In 2001, I requested that the road commission widen two roads in the township—15 Mile in the south end, and Cass Avenue in the north end. After they studied the issue, and in working with SEMCOG, they were able to secure federal funds to initiate the projects. As you know, the 15 Mile project was successfully completed, and the Cass Avenue project is currently underway.

We are fortunate to have the Cass Avenue widening underway this summer, as very few road widening projects are scheduled for the entire county—in fact only in Clinton and Macomb townships will you see any roads widened this year.

Your township board and I will continue to request repair projects for our roads. There has been a suggestion by a county wide task force that a millage be assessed to provide funds for road repairs in Macomb County. We will monitor this and inform our residents of any action that may be generated by that task force.

No matter what the conditions of our roads, please remember to drive safely and keep an eye out for our children who will soon be enjoying their summer vacations. As always, if you have concerns or questions, please do not hesitate to contact any of our hard working departments, township board members, myself, or others who work hard to keep Clinton Township a community that we can all be proud to call home.

Sincerely,

Robert J. Cannon  
Clinton Township Supervisor

## *Festival of the Senses—A Celebration of Art, Music, Food, Theater and Literary Works*

### **Clinton Township looks forward to second Festival of the Senses, with expanded hours, more artists and family features**

With 15,000 estimated attendees in 2007, Clinton Township is planning for another successful Festival of the Senses art show event. The festival will feature 200 artists, many fine restaurants, family and historical activities, music, theatrical performances, and much more.

With a full committee of community volunteers and several township employees, the Clinton Township Board has given approval to hold another event that will span two days: Saturday, September 20, and Sunday, September 21, 2008. The self-sustaining festival is supported by business and community sponsors. The hours of the festival will be 10 a.m.-7 p.m. on Saturday, and 10 a.m.-5 p.m. on Sunday.

Organizers plan a silent auction this year with each participating artist being asked to donate an item of their medium with the festival theme of "Faces".

Festival sponsorships are being sought at donation levels ranging from \$100 to \$5,000. The festival committee uses these funds, along with artist booth fees, for expenses and donates about 70-percent of the proceeds to charity.

Anyone interested in volunteering for any aspect of the festival may contact the Trustees Office at (586) 286-9366. More information and application forms are available at the 2008 Clinton Township Festival of the Senses web site at [www.ctfestivalofthesenses.com](http://www.ctfestivalofthesenses.com)

### **Online and phone payments for water and tax bills will soon be available**



Clinton Township is responding to residents requests for greater ease in making tax and water payments. Starting this May, electronic payments from a checking or savings account can be made by phone or by accessing the Clinton Township website, [www.clintontownship-mi.gov](http://www.clintontownship-mi.gov). All transactions are processed over secured connections and there is no additional cost to bill payers for this new service.

Tax payments must be made for the same day and are payable up to 7:00 p.m. Water payments can be made the same day or scheduled for a future date. Same day payments made after 7:00 p.m. will be counted as paid on the following business day. Watch for more specific instructions in your upcoming water bills and your 2008 summer tax bill.



### **U.S. Passport Card Applications accepted**

Effective February 1, 2008, U.S. Citizens may apply for the new

U.S. Passport Card, in anticipation of land border travel document requirements.

The passport card will facilitate entry and expedite document processing at U.S. land and sea ports-of-entry when arriving from Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean and Bermuda. The card may not be used to travel by air.

It will otherwise carry the rights and privileges of the U.S. Passport Book and will be adjudicated to the exact same standards.

The Department of State is issuing this passport card in response to the needs of border resident communities for a less expensive and more portable alternative to the traditional passport book. The card will have the same validity period as a passport book: 10 years for an adult, five for children 15 and younger. For adults who already have a passport book, they may apply for the card as a passport renewal and pay only \$20. First time applicants will pay \$45 for adult cards and \$35 for children.

To facility the frequent travel of U.S. citizens living in border communities and to meet DHS's operational needs at land borders, the passport card will contain a vicinity-read radio frequency identification (RFID) chip. This chip will link the card to a stored record in secure government databases.

There will be no personal information written to the RFID chip itself.

Passport card applications are available at the Township Clerk's Office.

Applications are accepted from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. everyday.

**NOTE:** Beginning February 1, 2008, the cost for a Passport was increased to \$100.00 (\$75.00 to the U.S. Department of State and \$25.00 to the acceptance agency)

### **Lawn care and landscaping steps to take to help keep our water clean**

- Maintain your lawn's mowing height at 3 inches.
- Select an organic or slow-release fertilizer for your lawn and one with low or no phosphorus. Also, sweep fertilizer that is left on sidewalks back onto your lawn.
- Soil test to tell you what, if any, fertilizer is needed in your yard. Contact local office of the Michigan State University Extension Service for more information.
- Place a thick layer of mulch (4 inches) around trees and plants to help retain water, reduce weeds and minimize the need for pesticides
- Choose plants that are native to Michigan because they are better equipped to tolerate Michigan's climate, require less fertilizing and are more disease resistant. Ask your local nurseries and greenhouses.



## Sister City Japanese Festival coming this summer

On the occasion of the 15th anniversary of the Sister City Exchange Program, Clinton Township will again be hosting a delegation of visitors from our sister city in Japan from July 11-19. Hosts do not need to live in Clinton Township, and they do not need to speak any Japanese. Hosts are considered first if they would like to travel to Japan next year as part of the trip to Yasu-shi. Contact the Trustees Office. On July 15, 2008, the biannual "Japanese Festival" will be held at the Main Branch of the Clinton-Macomb Public Library. Learn more about Japan as you experience a sampling of Japanese culture as our visitors showcase their talents. Activities will include interactive games, traditional Japanese food samplings, an exhibition of Japanese calligraphy, an opportunity to model traditional Japanese kimono and more! The event will run from 4 to 7 p.m. All ages are welcome. Host families are needed by mid-May.

## 2008 Clinton Township Gratiot Cruise set for Sunday, August 3



More than 70,000 spectators and classic car buffs are expected to take part in the 6th annual Clinton Township Gratiot Cruise, the single largest event held in the township. Clinton Township's Downtown Development Authority (DDA) will team up with the Gratiot Cruise Committee to stage the 2008 cruising event along the Gratiot Corridor. This year's event will be held from noon to 6 p.m. on Sunday, August 3. The opening events include a Grand Opening Parade that begins at Metropolitan Parkway and Gratiot at noon. The cruise route is a 5-mile long route extending from 14 Mile Road to north of Metropolitan Parkway. This year's plans bring an entirely new flavor to the event that is going into its sixth year. The 2008 cruise marks the first year that the DDA will take an active role in events planning with businesses along the Gratiot corridor. A wide variety of sponsorship levels are available to businesses who want to be part of the cruise fun. The Clinton Township Clerk's Office will coordinate distribution of a special 1-day permit that has been adopted by the township for any type of outdoor sales of food or merchandise during the Clinton Township Gratiot Cruise. Applicants must allow 2-3 weeks prior to the cruise in order for the permit to be processed.



## Upcoming Elections in Clinton Township

**May 6 – Issue: Macomb County Charter, and School Elections**

**August 5 – State Primary Election**

You must be registered to vote in Clinton Township 30 days prior to an election. By law, the Clerk's Office can no longer automatically mail out applications for absent voter ballots to all registered voters 60 years of age and older. Any registered voter who is eligible to receive an absent voter ballot must request to be placed on the Clerk's Office permanent list to automatically receive applications for all future elections. You can be placed on this list by doing one of the following: stop at the Elections Division at the Township Civic Center at 40700 Romeo Plank Road, or contact the Elections Division at (586) 723-8138 or e-mail the Clerk's Office at [elections@clintontownship-mi.gov](mailto:elections@clintontownship-mi.gov). If you have other questions concerning your eligibility to vote, please contact the Elections Division at (586) 286-9420.

## HELP WANTED! Election workers sought

We are always searching for Election Inspectors to work at our voting precincts.

**Qualifications: Registered voter in Macomb County**

**This community service is a paying position, \$135.00 for the day.**

**Applications are available at the Elections Office**

## Historical Village open to the public during summer events

The Clinton Township Historical commission and the Greater Clinton Township Historical Society will have the Historical Village open to the public on the following dates: June 29 for Log Cabin Day; July Concerts at the Gazebo; 9-11 Remembrance Day and 2008 Festival of the Senses, September 20 and 21. There will be craft demonstrations along with talks describing life in the 19th century and guides directing educational tours of the buildings.

## Understanding the digital television transition

Digital TV is not only a sharper image, it makes less demands on the airwaves through which the audio and video signals travel to reach your TV from the TV stations' transmission towers. It frees up the airwaves, which the government would like to use for other things, such as emergency notices. On February 17, 2009, the federal government is mandating that broadcast television stations air their programming only on the digital airwaves.

Do you have a cable television subscription? 65% of households do. Those TVs that are hooked up to cable or satellite will work after February 17, 2009. It doesn't matter if the TV is old or new. If you have cable TV or satellite service, you do not have to worry about your TV going dark. Comcast and WOW both plan to have analog as well as digital channels for quite some time. Their decision to transition their cable systems to digital is a business decision, not affected by the February 2009 deadline, which only affects broadcast television.

If you have any televisions in your home that are not hooked up to cable TV or satellite, also known as antenna TV's -- these will work after February 17, 2009, if one of the following is true: if the TV is new, that is, if you recently bought it and know for

sure that it has the ability to tune into digital channels, then you can rest assured that you will not need to do anything further for it to work after the national digital transition date. If it is an older TV, then you need to buy an analog to digital converter for your TV, to receive digital channels.

If you don't have cable TV or satellite, then you will have to buy an analog to digital converter, unless you know for sure that your TV is new enough to have a built-in digital converter, also known as a digital tuner. For this, you must consult the owner's manual.

If you wish to purchase a digital converter, then you should take advantage of a national program that allows two coupons per household, each worth \$40 off the purchase price of a converter. With the digital converter you will not be able to see cable TV or satellite channels -- these analog to digital converters are only for broadcast channels. Digital converters will likely cost \$50-\$60 and will be available at electronics stores, department stores, and many others. Of course with your coupon, you will only spend \$10-\$20 apiece.

The 24-hour Hotline phone number to call for the \$40 coupons is 1-888-DTV-2009, that is 1-888-388-2009.



### CTTV now streaming on the web

To find Clinton Township TV on the World Wide Web, go to [www.clintontownship-mi.gov/cttv](http://www.clintontownship-mi.gov/cttv)

## FCC has ended sole cable arrangements for apartments, condominium complexes

The Federal Communications Commission last fall struck down the practice of individual cable companies being given exclusive rights to provide service to a multiple dwelling unit.

Exclusive contracts between cable companies and private apartment complexes, landlords or tenant association have been one of the most significant barriers to competition. For more information, contact the Federal Communications Commission through its web site: [www.fcc.gov](http://www.fcc.gov).

## Changes to Assessing Rules

(continued from page 1)

If you have been in your home for a long period of time, it is unlikely that the actual property tax bill will go down even if the SEV goes down. Taxes will not go down until the SEV falls below the taxable value. For many long-term property owners the SEV is 20 percent or more above the taxable value. Housing values would need to go down 30 percent or more before most would see their property tax bills go down.

For those who have recently purchased property, they are much more likely to see actual reductions in property tax bills based on a declining housing market. Under Proposal A, when property sells, the cap comes off of the taxable value, and the SEV and taxable value are the same in the first year after sale. For those property owners where the SEV and taxable value are very close or equal, a reduction in the SEV can also mean a reduction in the taxable value-and thus a reduction in property taxes.

## Public Works Announces...

### Recycling expands in Clinton Township

Public Works is happy to announce the expansion of acceptable items that residents can place in their recycling bins: plastic bottles and jars numbered 3 through 7, magazines and cardboard are now accepted by Waste Management for recycling in the township's curbside recycling program. If you are new to the township, stop by the DPW to pick up a bin. It's easy to recycle in Clinton Township: place the bin at your curb on your regular rubbish pickup day.

For a complete list of items, visit the Public Works page of the township web site. Call (586) 286-9465 for more information.

### Trash Pickup Holidays

When a holiday falls during the normal work week, collection will be made the following day with Friday's collection on Saturday. The following holidays are observed during spring and summer: Memorial Day, 4th of July and Labor Day